

NCCIC Is a Service of the Child Care Bureau

10530 Rosehaven Street, Suite 400 • Fairfax, VA 22030 • Phone: 800-616-2242
Fax: 800-716-2242 • Email: info@nccic.org • Web: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov>

ACTIVITY: AFFIRMING COMMUNICATION

Activity Objective: The purpose of this activity is to practice the art of positive communication and to experience the role communication plays in creating and maintaining positive relationships.

Suggestions for Presenters

1. For this activity, participants need to be seated next to each other, preferably around tables. It is most important that participants can easily speak with and hear each other.
2. Let participants know that for the next few minutes you would like them to **THINK** about something positive about the person seated on their right. This may be something that person does that contributes to the partnership, a personality trait or some other positive characteristic that promotes cooperation, coordination and/or collaboration. It may be something you just observed or learned about that person today. (As an alternative - if any of the participants do not know the person to their right, they may ask that person, "What are three things that you are proud of about yourself as a member of this partnership?")
3. After a few minutes, ask for a volunteer to begin sharing thoughts about the person sitting next to him or her. Next proceed to that person (giving him or her an opportunity to react to what was said about them if they choose), and ask that person to share his or her thoughts about the person sitting to their right.
4. Encourage everyone to really hear and pay attention to the positive words that others say about them. Continue the sharing until everyone has had an opportunity to share.
5. After each person has shared, ask participants to respond to the following questions. Record their responses on chart paper:
 - **How did this communication make you feel?** Participants may comment that they felt unique, valued, and important.
 - **What effect did all of these positive statements have on your feeling about the group?** Participants may comment that they felt more openness, a sense of partnership, and an atmosphere of caring.
 - **What did you learn about others?** Participants may comment that they gained new information about others, or that they learned to value and appreciate others.

- **What did you learn about communicating?** Participants may comment that they learned the value of beginning a communication with a positive statement or the value of paying attention and learning about what people are doing well.
- **How does positive communication impact partnerships?** Participants may brainstorm a variety of responses such as:
 - Positive statements can pave the way – they can set people at ease and make them more open to participation and partnership building.
 - All interactions – whether in one-on-one conversations, group situations, or formal trainings – are opportunities for learning, to observe and listen better and thus to improve our communication skills and strengthen our relationships.
 - Positive language is the language of partnership.
 - We learn to be better communicators by paying attention to the way that others communicate.
 - Listening is a gift to yourself and other people.
 - By observing and listening to the ways that team members communicate with each other, we can learn how to tailor our communication styles to be most effective.

Materials Needed

Easel, flip chart paper, and markers

Resource

Adapted from "Activity 1-1: Affirming Communication "(1996), in *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community, Communicating with Parents*, Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. p. 10-12
www.headstartinfo.org/pdf/communicating_with_parents/communicating_with_parents.pdf